

Native Language Immersion Student Achievement Act
Highlights from Senator Tester's Senate Bill 1948
prepared by Laura Sankey for the
State-Tribal Relations Committee meeting
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- This bill would create a grant program for eligible entities to apply for grants, with a total appropriation in fiscal year 2015 of \$5 million.
- **Eligible entities:** a school or a private or tribal nonprofit organization that currently runs or has plans to implement a program that support schools using Native American languages as the primary language of instruction for all curriculum taught at the schools → i.e., this bill is aimed at **immersion language programs**
- The bill specifies the following **authorized activities** are eligible under the grant program: support Native American language education and development; develop or refine instructional curriculum, including teaching materials and activities; fund training opportunities for teachers and certain staff and administrators; and other activities that promote Native American language education and development.
- At this point, there are **more than 65 immersion language programs** currently operating. The available funding could be awarded to any of these programs or to any new program that would qualify as an eligible entity.
- S.1948 hearings were held in front of the Senate Indian Affairs committee on June 18, 2014. The bill will be marked up on July 30, 2014 and will hopefully move out of committee and on to the full Senate on that date.
- While this bill is aimed at those eligible entities who are already running or plan to establish an immersion language program, the efforts of the Montana Indian Language Preservation Pilot Program have been varied and the opportunity to dovetail the MILP3 with this bill is limited.